

Council on Postsecondary Education
January 30, 2006

P-16 Council Update

At its December 14 meeting, the P-16 Council continued to address the policy issues it had identified in September as priority foci for the year: establishing a more rigorous high school curriculum, providing an adequate supply of qualified educators to teach this more rigorous curriculum, developing a consistent system for high school-college dual enrollment, creating an integrated P-16 data system, and ensuring that students have affordable access to quality education through college.

Council on Postsecondary Education staff presented the results of several of its research projects pertinent to these policy issues. The *Underprepared Students in Kentucky* report showed that nearly half of recent Kentucky high school graduates who enrolled in a public postsecondary institution in the fall of 2002 were not prepared for college-level work in English, reading, or mathematics. The CPE will follow up this spring with a conference on best practices for the remediation and retention of underprepared undergraduates. These and other findings from the study framed the P-16 Council members' discussion of the Kentucky Department of Education's proposed changes to minimum high school graduation requirements. The P-16 Council formally approved a recommendation to the Kentucky Board of Education supporting revision of Kentucky's high school graduation requirements, without an "opt out" option, to meet postsecondary entrance expectations, including more rigorous mathematics requirements and the addition of a world languages requirement. P-16 Council Chair Dorie Combs communicated this recommendation in a letter to members of the KBE.

Preliminary results of a CPE study of dual enrollment in Kentucky showed, among other findings, that students taking college courses within the categories of the pre-college curriculum, such as English and mathematics, matriculate into postsecondary programs at a higher rate than high school students taking occupational and technical courses at the college level. The CPE also is conducting a survey of postsecondary institutions regarding their dual enrollment and dual credit policies and practices. The P-16 Council plans to use these findings to make policy recommendations for dual enrollment in Kentucky within the year and in time for the 2007 General Assembly.

The CPE's affordability study, *Changing Direction: Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy*, targeted key populations needing additional financial aid resources: low-income and minority students, as well as low-income independent students who do not receive as much state aid as dependent students. These findings (as well as those from the previously mentioned studies) have shaped discussions undertaken by the KEES Policy Issues Work Group, which has focused attention on the issues of revising the KEES curriculum to

meet college preparatory standards, the development of a separate financial aid program for adult students, and the need for increased need-based aid.

The CPE also shared its five-step policy intervention plan to attain the national average in educational objectives by 2020. This was the first time that some members of the P-16 Council partner agencies had seen the statewide goals of baccalaureate attainment and had been presented with the concerted effort it would take to reach them.

The Council funded two new local P-16 councils and two additional initiatives at existing councils, and local council representatives shared their commitment to work with the state council and its partner staffs to advocate not only for funding local councils but also for the many other P-16 initiatives in the 2006-08 budget designed to improve Kentucky's level of educational attainment.

Education Cabinet Secretary Ginni Fox reported on Governor Fletcher's educational priorities. Many recommendations emerged from the Governor's P-12 Advisory Group made up of superintendents, principals, and teachers. The group met with the state's chief academic officers and key administrators to recommend policy changes for professional development and certification of P-12 teachers. These recommendations align with those issued in the final report of The Business Forum. Secretary Fox praised the role that Kentucky's state and local P-16 councils play in raising Kentucky's level of educational attainment and increasing its economic competitiveness. She also described the key initiatives of the Cabinet's joint budget request: funding local P-16 councils, integrating P-16 learning delivery systems, developing a cross-agency P-16 data warehouse, and creating a shared P-16 high-speed telecommunications network.

The State P-16 Council will next meet March 29.